



## CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED RAIL AUTHORITY

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### **ALTERNATIVES OUTLINED FOR KEY SEGMENTS OF HIGH-SPEED RAIL**

#### *PUBLIC HELPS SHAPE SAN FRANCISCO-SAN JOSE, FRESNO-MERCED PROJECT*

SAN JOSE – Based on input gathered at hundreds of public meetings throughout the Bay Area and Central Valley, the California High-Speed Rail Authority today released its preliminary alternatives analyses for two sections of the nation’s first true high-speed rail system.

“We are listening closely to the communities along the proposed routes to develop recommendations that will deliver the highest level of public benefit with the least negative impacts,” said Curt Pringle, Chairman of the California High-Speed Rail Authority. “These reports are an important milestone in our work to collaborate with local, state and federal agency partners to build the high-speed train in California.” Pringle noted that the high-speed train is consistent with the state’s commitment to environmental responsibility, better mobility and providing jobs and economic stimulus for Californians.

#### **San Francisco to San Jose**

The Preliminary Alternatives Analysis for the San Francisco to San Jose portion of the projects reconfirms that a four-track, grade separated, shared Caltrain and high-speed train system is feasible and is the recommended alternative on the Peninsula.

The Analysis found that this alignment, using the existing Caltrain right-of-way, would minimize environmental impacts and increase inter-city connectivity, while also improving the safety and reliability of Caltrain commuter service. The shared-track system would allow high-speed trains to operate at speeds up to 125 mph and Caltrain to operate at up to 110 mph.

The Analysis recommends continued study of four stations along the route:

- **Downtown San Francisco:** A joint terminal solution at the Transbay Transit Center and 4<sup>th</sup> and King.
- **San Francisco Airport:** A connector station in Millbrae

- **Potential Mid-Peninsula Station:** Redwood City, Palo Alto and Mountain View Caltrain stations are currently under consideration. One or none of these potential locations could be selected to be part of the system.
- **Downtown San Jose:** Diridon Station.

The Analysis considered an alternative downtown San Francisco station at Beale Street, but found that it would increase costs while providing no advantage over the joint terminal solution. The report recommends that the Beale Street alternative not be included in further studies as the environmental review process goes ahead.

The Analysis calls for limiting the use of high berms in commercial or residential areas where they would significantly reduce community connectivity or mobility, or where local opposition is strong. In response to public comments, tunnel options have been added for further study throughout the corridor.

The Analysis calls for detailed evaluation of six options for the vertical placement of track along the route:

- Arial Viaduct
- Berm or Mechanically Stabilized Earth
- At-Grade
- Open Trench
- Covered Trench/Tunnel
- Deep Tunnel

The Analysis notes that it is not always possible to connect two different options from one segment to another, which in some cases will require communities along the corridor to “share” a common alternative.

No design options along the corridor were eliminated from further consideration due to cost alone. The Analysis notes, however, some design options could cost four to five times more than previous estimates for the project.

## **Merced to Fresno**

The Preliminary Alternatives Analysis for the Merced to Fresno portion of the project reconfirms that the alternatives that closely follow existing rail corridors – the Union Pacific Railroad and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad – best serve the purpose and need of the high-speed train project.

The Analysis found that the Union Pacific Railroad alignment optimizes travel time while minimizing environmental impacts, and has the support of a number of local governments, including Merced County, the City of Merced, the City of Atwater and local transportation agencies and water districts.

The Analysis notes that the Burlington Northern Santa Fe alignment also provides a viable alternative for further study.

The Analysis found that a Western Madera route west of State Route 99 would impact many small farms and other private properties, and does not travel along an existing transportation corridor.

In addition, a hybrid alignment using both the Union Pacific and Burlington Northern corridors, would increase travel times and had the highest number of water crossings.

The Analysis found that the proposed station at the Downtown Merced Transit Center best satisfies the purpose of the project and provides the best access to regional highways and public transit. The report recommends further study of Downtown Merced station rather than two alternatives, the Castle Commerce Center Station and the Merced BNSF/Amtrak station.

The results of both Alternatives Analyses will be discussed among technical and policy working groups of local and regional officials in each area in preparation for the draft environmental impact reports required for each part of the project.

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